

IN THE CLAIMS

**Please amend the claims as follows:**

1. (Previously Presented) An information transmission apparatus, comprising:

reception means for receiving a plurality of taste information that represent respective tastes of a plurality of users from a plurality of terminal apparatuses of the plurality of users;

storage means for storing the received plurality of taste information and group information in association with the plurality of users;

search means for receiving an introduction request including search key information from a first user, and searching for a second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in association with the plurality of users in the storage means;

retrieval means for retrieving at least taste information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user, the retrieved taste information or group information not being associated with the first user; and

transmission means for transmitting the retrieved taste information or group information associated with the second user to a terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user.

2-10. (Canceled)

11. (Previously Presented) An information transmission method of an information transmission apparatus, comprising:

receiving a plurality of taste information that represent respective tastes of a plurality of users from a plurality of terminal apparatuses of the plurality of users;

storing, in a predetermined storage unit, the received plurality of taste information and group information in association with the plurality of users;

receiving, by the information transmission apparatus, an introduction request including search key information from a first user;

searching, by the information transmission apparatus, for a second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in association with the plurality of users in the predetermined storage unit;

retrieving taste information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user, the retrieved taste information or group information not being associated with the first user; and

transmitting, by the information transmission apparatus, at least the retrieved taste information or group information associated with the second user to a terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user.

12. (Previously Presented) The information transmission method according to claim 11, wherein

the transmitting step transmits at least the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the second user to the terminal apparatus of the first user.

13. (Previously Presented) The information transmission method according to claim 11, wherein

the receiving the introduction request step receives a part of the plurality of taste information as the search key information;

the searching step searches for taste information including the search key information from the plurality of taste information of the plurality of users stored in the predetermined storage unit to identify the second user; and

the transmitting step transmits at least the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the second user to the terminal apparatus of the first user.

14. (Previously Presented) The information transmission method according to claim 11, wherein

the transmitting step transmits at least the taste information of the second user and the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the second user to the terminal apparatus of the first user.

15. (Previously Presented) The information transmission method according to claim 11, wherein

the receiving the introduction request step receives a part of the plurality of taste information as the search key information;

the searching step searches for taste information including the search key information from the plurality of taste information of the plurality of users stored in the predetermined storage unit to identify the second user; and

the transmitting step transmits at least the taste information of the second user and the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the second user to the terminal apparatus of the first user.

16-20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously Presented) An information transmission apparatus, comprising:

a reception unit configured to receive a plurality of taste information that represent respective tastes of a plurality of users from a plurality of terminal apparatuses of the plurality of users;

a storage unit configured to store the received plurality of taste information and group information in association with the plurality of users;

a search unit configured to receive an introduction request including search key information from a first user, and to search for a second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in association with the plurality of users in the storage unit;

a retrieval unit configured to retrieve at least taste information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user, the retrieved taste information or group information not being associated with the first user; and

a transmission unit configured to transmit the retrieved taste information or group information associated with the second user to a terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user.

22. (Previously Presented) The information transmission apparatus according to claim 21, wherein

the transmission unit is configured to transmit at least the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the second user to the terminal apparatus of the first user.

23. (Previously Presented) The information transmission apparatus according to claim 21, wherein

the search unit is configured to receive a part of the plurality of taste information as the search key information;

the search unit is configured to search for taste information including the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in the storage unit to identify the second user; and

the transmission unit is configured to transmit at least the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the second user to the terminal apparatus of the first user.

24. (Previously Presented) The information transmission apparatus according to claim 21, wherein

the transmission unit is configured to transmit at least the taste information of the second user and the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the second user to the terminal apparatus of the first user.

25. (Previously Presented) The information transmission apparatus according to claim 21, wherein

the search unit is configured to receive a part of the plurality of taste information as the search key information;

the search unit is configured to search for taste information including the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in the storage unit to identify the second user; and

the transmission unit is configured to transmit at least the taste information of the second user and the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the second user to the terminal apparatus of the first user.

26-30. (Canceled)

31. (Currently Amended) A non-transitory computer-readable storage medium having embedded therein instructions, which when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform a method, comprising:

receiving a plurality of taste information that represent respective tastes of a plurality of users from a plurality of terminal apparatuses of the plurality of users;

storing the received plurality of taste information and group information in association with the plurality of users;

receiving an introduction request including search key information from a first user;

searching for a second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in association with the plurality of users in the storing step;

retrieving at least taste information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user, the retrieved taste information or group information not being associated with the first user; and

transmitting the retrieved taste information or group information to a terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user.

32. (Previously Presented) An information transmission apparatus, comprising:

reception means for receiving a plurality of taste information that represent respective tastes of a plurality of users from a plurality of terminal apparatuses of the plurality of users;

storage means for storing the received plurality of taste information and group information in association with the plurality of users;

search means for receiving an introduction request including search key information from a first user, and searching for a second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in association with the plurality of users in the storage means; and

transmission means for transmitting at least taste information or group information associated with the second user, for introduction to the first user, to a terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user, when the reception means receives the search key information from one of the plurality of users, wherein

the transmitted taste information or group information is not associated with the first user.

33. (Canceled)

34. (New) The information transmission apparatus according to claim 1, wherein

the retrieval means retrieves the group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user, the group information not being associated with the first user and identifying an interest group to which the second user belongs; and

the transmission means transmits the retrieved group information associated with the second user to the terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user.

35. (New) The information transmission method according to claim 11, wherein  
the retrieving step retrieves the group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user, the group information not being associated with the first user and identifying an interest group to which the second user belongs; and  
the transmitting step transmits the retrieved group information associated with the second user to the terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user.

36. (New) The information transmission apparatus according to claim 21, wherein  
the retrieval unit is configured to retrieve the group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user, the group information not being associated with the first user and identifying an interest group to which the second user belongs; and  
the transmission unit is configured to transmit the retrieved group information associated with the second user to the terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user.

37. (New) The non-transitory computer-readable storage medium according to claim 31, wherein  
the retrieving step retrieves the group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user, the group information not being associated with the first user and identifying an interest group to which the second user belongs; and  
the transmitting step transmits the retrieved group information associated with the second user to the terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user.

38. (New) The information transmission apparatus according to claim 32, wherein  
the transmission means transmits the group information associated with the second user, for introduction to the first user, to the terminal apparatus corresponding to the first



user, the transmitted group information not being associated with the first user and identifying an interest group to which the second user belongs.